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Farm Broadcasters Letter

Letter No. 2309

April 23, 1987

**HOGS
OUTLOOK**

The U.S. import of pork and live hogs are forecast to drop this year, while exports will rise, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Canadian hogs are now priced lower than U.S., but some strengthening of the Canadian dollar is forecast for late 1987. U.S. imports of Canadian hogs will likely slow by the end of the year. U.S. pork exports to Japan are rising as the yen strengthens.

WHEAT OUTLOOK

The world use of wheat has risen to an estimated 517 million metric tons this year, compared with 235 million in 1960, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The average gain has been about 11 million tons per year. If that rate prevails until 2000, world wheat use will rise to about 660 million metric tons. Most of the increase is occurring in low-income countries where per capita food consumption still has not reached its physical limits and where grains, rather than meat, are the principal food.

**U.S. EXPORTS
TO EAST ASIA**

U.S. agricultural exports to East Asia are forecast at \$8 billion 500 million for fiscal 1987, a 7 percent increase from the previous year and about 32 percent of total U.S. farm exports, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Fiscal 1986 sales dropped 10 percent to their lowest since 1979, because of lower prices and a much-reduced U.S. share of the region's cotton and coarse grain imports. U.S. cotton sales to the region are expected to increase substantially in fiscal 1987, reflecting more competitive prices. U.S. shipments of coarse grains and soybeans are expected to be much higher, helped by more competitive prices and less availability in some producing countries.

**EC INCREASES
INTERVENTION
CORN STOCKS**

The European Community Commission has opened a late June intervention tender for 1 million metric tons of French and Spanish corn. Since intervention purchasing normally ends April 30, this extension may be a move to firm domestic markets in expectation of the impending import of 2 million tons of U.S. corn under the U.S.-European Community agreement on compensation for EC enlargement. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, expanded intervention stocks of corn could bring additional pressure on the EC to continue and even enlarge its unprecedented subsidized corn export campaign. So far, the EC has authorized nearly all of the current 500,000 ton open tender for free-market subsidized corn exports.

WANT EQUAL
CHANCE

Sec'y of Agriculture Richard Lyng during his trip to Japan spoke at the Japanese National Press Club in Tokyo. Said Lyng, "We want to see that Japanese consumers be given the same opportunity--the same choice--in the purchase of U.S. products that the U.S. customer now has in buying Japanese products."

OUTLOOK FOR
U.S. EXPORTS
& FARM COSTS

The production costs per planted acre for the major U.S. crops are forecast to be down 1 to 3 percent in 1987, with variable expenses declining the most, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Fertilizer costs per acre are falling about 2 percent. Lower loan rates and government trade programs are helping the U.S. recover lost shares of world markets, and export prospects are improving for feed grains, soybean meal and soybean oil. Corn sales to Japan, Korea and the USSR have picked up.

RECESSION IN
AUSTRALIA AND
N. ZEALAND
AGRICULTURE

The economies of Australia and New Zealand rely heavily on agricultural export demand. Depressed world agricultural markets have forced the region's farm sectors into recession. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Australian farm income fell almost a fifth in 1985/86. In New Zealand, the 1985/86 season was described as the worst financial year on record for sheep and beef farmers. The income of dairy farmers also declined. Both countries are active supporters of the current multilateral trade negotiations, and are seeking more liberal trade.

JAPAN ASSISTS
FARMERS

An analysis of government assistance in Japanese agriculture shows that in 1982-84, the value of government programs and border intervention such as tariffs and import restrictions, equaled about 69 percent of Japanese farm income, about 2½ times the level in the European Community. Levels of assistance varied among commodities. Grain and dairy producers were the most heavily assisted. Beef, pork, soybean, and sugar producers received intermediate levels of assistance. Poultry and citrus producers were the least assisted.

U.S. EXPORTS
FALL

In the first 5 months of fiscal 1987, U.S. agricultural exports fell to \$11 billion 900 million, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. That's 7 percent below the same period in 1986, when imports dropped 3 percent to \$8 billion 400 million. Grain shipments, especially corn to the USSR, for the Oct. 1986 to Feb. 1987 period accounted for most of the decline in export value. However, increases for cotton, fruits and vegetables, livestock products, and animal feeds offset much of the fall in grain exports.

CANADIAN
CORN

Canada has expanded the coverage of its import duty to apply to all mixtures containing corn, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Previously, mixtures with one-third corn or less were exempt. This change applies to goods released from customs on or after April 6. The measure is not expected to have much impact on trade volume since it will not affect the large feed corn deliveries to British Columbia that were exempted. A further review was scheduled for this month in response to claims of hardship by Canadian corn processors.

FROM OUR
TELEVISION
SERVICE

4-H FOR YOUTH IN AMERICA...Delegates representing 4.5 million youth were recently in Washington for the 57th National 4-H Conference. Jill Faldmo, a 4-H member from Provo, Utah, describes the highlights and objectives of the conference. DeBoria Janifer interviews. (176)

4-H FOR YOUTH IN AMERICA...Greater involvement of youth in 4-H program development is one of the major objectives of this year's National 4-H Conference. Tracey Jones, a 4-H member from Charlottesville, Va., focuses on the primary topics of concern in 4-H right now. DeBoria Janifer interviews. (177)

CHANGES IN FARMING TRENDS...USDA economist Terry Townsend talks about the reduction of the farm labor pool and its contribution to stress on the farms. Vic Powell interviews. (178)

ACID RAIN RESEARCH...Carl Zeller with USDA's Forest Service describes research on effects of acid rain on plants and crops particularly where precipitation is not as great. Vic Powell interviews. (179)

NATIONAL 4-H CONFERENCE...Scott Pruitt, a 4-H member from Greenville, Ind., talks about this year's National 4-H Conference and about how he sees 4-H and its role in agriculture for the future. DeBoria Janifer interviews. (180)



FROM OUR RADIO
SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1560...(Weekly 13½ min documentary) Brenda Curtis traces the history of change in grain trade relations between the United States and the Soviet Union from the 1960's through the present.

AGRITAPE/FARM PROGRAM REPORT #1549...(Weekly reel of news features) USDA news highlights; 1987 crop honey program; The great fly-in; Trash disposal hazards; Giving pests the "flu".

CONSUMER TIME #1042...(Weekly reel of 2½-3 min features) Quick diets lack proper nutrition; Brewing your own coffee; American eating habits; Calories and exercise; Teenage pregnancies.

USDA RADIO NEWS SERVICE...Tues, May 5, Weekly weather and crop outlook; Dairy products report; Fri, May 8, Vegetables report; Mon, May 11, Crop production; Horticultural products review; Soviet grain outlook; Tues, May 12, World oilseed situation; World cotton situation; World tobacco situation. Dial the USDA National News Line 202-488-8358 or 8359. All material changed at 5 p.m. ET each working day.

OFF MIKE

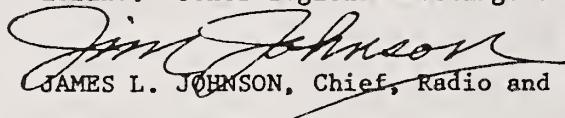
With all the high temperature records being set around the country, it seems strange to talk about snow...but we need to get in one more "it was a strange winter" comment. It comes from Herb Plambeck, Des Moines, IA. He said the winter was the mildest in 67 years, and "It was so mild, in fact, that I planted my first batch of lettuce, radishes, onions and potatoes on February 11. My second plantings, made in March, came through...in spite of the March 28 blizzard." We haven't even been able to work up the garden yet. To wet ... Another NAFB'er steps into the ranks of top station management. Gary Wright has accepted the general management at WKAN/WLRT, Kankakee, IL, the home base for NAFB vice president for the NE region Marla Behrends. He leaves WFIN/WHMQ, Findlay, OH. Consequently, the station is looking for a broadcaster to do farm. If you're interested, contact general manager Ron Griffin. His phone number is 419-422-4545. Our congratulations! We just hope Gary can still find time for a

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bit of turf research on the local 18 from time to time ... We got caught up in an assumption last week when we reported a group of farm broadcasters were traveling to Japan as part of Secretary Lyng's trip there. Wrong. That was coincidental. The farm broadcasters actually were on the trip to visit Japanese cooperatives, and the trip was put together by Don Lerch of Lerch & Co., here in Washington. Dangerous things, those assumptions ... Couple points of interest concerning NAFB regional meetings. Two are just around the corner: Southcentral in Baton Rouge (April 30-May 2), LA, and West in Seattle, WA (May 1-3). Doug Thomas (Southern States Net, Baton Rouge) says one breakfast will be served in old slave quarters, and Gary Stewart (Northwest Ag News Net, Seattle) reminds us...again...about the Indian salmon barbecue on a Puget Sound island. Other regional meetings are just around the next corner.


 JAMES L. JOHNSON, Chief, Radio and Television Division